SCP
19940

* JAN 8 1909
THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY.

[Reprint from the BIBLIOTHECA SACRA, October, 1895.]

CALVINISM: THE ORIGIN AND SAFEGUARD OF OUR CONSTITUTIONAL LIBERTIES.

BY THE REV. ABRAHAM KUYPER, D.D.

ARTICLE IV.

CALVINISM: THE ORIGIN AND SAFEGUARD OF OUR CONSTITUTIONAL LIBERTIES.[1]

BY THE REV. ABRAHAM KUYPER, D. D.

IV.

WE go back another century, from 1650 to 1550, from the Calvinistic troubles in England to the struggle of the Huguenots in France. It must be shown that the Independents and the Huguenots were congenial to each other, as well as that they differed; only when the affiliation of the two is established, does the line of Calvinistic development appear unbroken.

Their spiritual affiliation is shown, first of all, by de Coligni's plan of colonization, which, though but little known, is exceedingly noteworthy. It is well known that de Coligni, however different in character, was the Cromwell of the Huguenots; and, without his faults, was, no less than the Protector, the soul and sword of Calvinism. As much as four years before the Huguenots took up arms against the court in 1559, and the martyrs' woes had been endured in silence for nearly forty years, the natural leaders of the Calvinists began to see that it would not do, in the long run, to submit to slaughter without defence. From a writing to Cardinal Boromeus it appears that the Huguenots numbered nearly half of the population of France, and this fact stimulated both their desire to offer armed resistance, and the purpose of the king to violently exterminate them. The very increase of their numbers rendered their position critical. This was suspected

[1] Translated from the Dutch by the Rev. J. Hendrik de Vries, M. A., Bronxville, N. Y.

in the cabinet of Catherine de' Medici, and led to the horrors of the Bartholomew massacre. Admiral de Coligni likewise saw through this, and it led him to devise a plan of colonization. "If then Calvinism is not to be tolerated in France, allow your Huguenots to emigrate to America. Let there be a Catholic France with Calvinistic colonies. Then will our persecutions be ended, and as a naval power also, France will be the successful competitor of Spain and Portugal." Henry II. deemed this project not altogether impracticable, and in August of 1555 Durand de Villegagnon, a Maltese Knight, and Vice-Admiral of Bretagne, set sail with two of the king's men-of-war, to found a colony in Brazil. He landed in the Bay of Janeiro, planted the flag of France, and named the fort which he built Coligni, after the hero whose project he was carrying out. In the following year three ships of the royal navy were employed in the transportation of emigrants. But, alas! even then a less noble intention was entertained at court. Orders were sent to Fort Coligni to introduce Romish worship. This put a stop to further Huguenot emigration, and those who were already in Brazil were overtaken by the Portuguese and most pitilessly massacred.

But de Coligni went on, and in 1562 induced King Charles IX. to send out three men-of-war with Huguenot colonists to North America. The fort they built was named, after the king, Carolina, to which in their turn the states of North and South Carolina owe their name. By bad management, however, this fort also fell into the enemy's hands. The Spanish marines took it, and the Huguenots they strung on trees, with the base superscription over their heads: "Killed as heretics, not as Frenchmen." This cruelty became the more notorious in history because it incited that Gascony nobleman, Dominique de Gourgues, to take revenge by going to America, and obtaining a hearing with the Indians; with their help to recapture this fort, and then, with equal cruelty,

to string up the Spaniards to the same trees on which he found the bodies of the Huguenots, with this writing above their heads: "Killed as murderers, not as Spaniards." But aside from this historic incident, who does not see the striking similarity between this colonization plan of de Coligni which ended in failure, and that of the Puritans which met with success? The eyes of both looked for a new world, the glance of both was turned toward America, and in Coligni's idea, as well as in Robinson's, the consciousness found expression that Calvinistic faith could not flourish in a commonwealth constituted after Romish state-law, but rather carried within itself a creative principle which contained a state-law of its own, and a new political life.

On the question of toleration, Independents and Huguenots, though less closely, were also allied. It cannot be denied that, impelled by passions so violently aroused by warfare without quarter, cruelties were also practised by them. Facts are facts, and to falsify history is no temptation to us, for the reason that Calvinism does not seek its strength in persons, but in principles. The question is: What was the desire and the design of those Calvinistic leaders in France? And the answer is found in that important document of state which was issued by the Huguenot leaders, on the sixteenth day of December, 1573. Hence after the massacre of St. Bartholomew and conceived in the midst of its horrors. It bore the title "Reglement de Politie et de Guerre," and contained the carefully-outlined fundamental law which was to be the constitution of the Huguenot state in France. In this constitution, Article XXXIII. treats of the attitude toward Romanists, who were by far the minority in Reformed neighborhoods, and reads: "Unarmed Catholics are to be treated in the gentlest possible manner. No outrage shall be committed upon them, nor shall violence be done against their conscience, honor, or property. They shall be allowed to dwell in the bonds of friendship and peace, as good citizens and beloved

brethren." And this was written on the day after Jonneau, the invincible commander of Sancerre, together with that powerful preacher de la Bourgade, had been most cruelly murdered, in spite of the most sacred pledge of safety, by the troops of the king.

The moral character of their movement points with equal definiteness to the austerity of the Puritans. The soldiers of Cromwell, as referred to above, committed no outrage, but respected honor; they were not profane, but devout. This was foreshadowed by the army of the Huguenots, of which Varillas, their bitterest enemy, narrates in his "Histoire de Charles IX.," that, among them prayers were made with utmost regularity, every offence visited by immediate penalty. Idleness was not countenanced, and if Marshal Brissac prided himself on his cleverness to settle every dispute among his soldiers, the Calvinists did better still: their troops quarrelled none. Daily they sang psalms. They never gambled. Their food was simple, and venders were forbidden to offer other diet. Immorality was not practised, and the farmers were paid for their produce with market regularity in times of peace. The opponent, of course, considered all this ascetic follies, but whoever is acquainted with the morals of the French army, in its earliest and latest campaigns, cannot but wonder, with Varillas, at the strength of a principle which wrought from the French infantry an army such as this. No one will deny that this family resemblance to the Puritan army is striking. The affiliation of Independents and Huguenots is clearly seen in their sternly moral tone.

The same is true, finally, of their fundamental concept of politics; even to such a degree that in broad outline the American Constitution is almost a literal fac-simile of the Huguenot Constitution of 1573. The principles of the "Reglement de Policie et de Guerre," referred to above, are these: From their homes the Huguenots come to the market place, and swear for themselves and their descendants that the fol-

lowing statutes shall be kept. Then, after taking an oath, they elect from their own number, by a popular vote, a mayor and a council of one hundred members. The choice is made from the people and the nobility, without preference of either class. The one hundred councillors divide themselves into two chambers, one of which consists of the mayor and twenty-five councillors and the other of the remaining seventy-five. No decree of the mayor is valid without the approval of the first. The approval of the seventy-five is needed for every matter of importance, such as the introduction of new laws, raising taxes, military operations, coinage, etc. The mayor abdicates each year, and is not eligible for re-election. Likewise the two councils resign from office each year on January one, but may be elected again. The right of election of the first chamber is vested in the second, and that of the second in the first. A jury is added to the tribunal. From these mayors and first councils, a state governor and a captain-general are appointed. These appointments also are to be made by the people; but, on account of the embarrassments of the time, it rested temporarily with the councils. Their power is by no means unlimited, and, mark you, at the close of the war, they lose their rank, and return to private life. This is exactly what was witnessed in England after Cromwell's death, and in America after the late civil war. Indeed, there may be noted but one point of difference between the basal thought of this Reglement and that of the American Constitution. In the Reglement the appointing power is exercised for the people by their appointees; in America even minor elections are decided by the popular vote. It must be granted that the Calvinists in France were ready to return to the government of the king. Article IV. of their constitution states this in so many words: "in waiting till it please God to soften the king's heart, and to re-establish the ancient liberties of France." But so much is certain: the fundamental outlines of the liberties realized in America by the Puritans

were formulated, one hundred years before, by the Calvinists in France.

In spite, however, of these clearly-outlined traits of resemblance, in their plan of colonization, in the homage they paid to the liberty of conscience, in their morals and in their fundamentals in politics, the Independents and the Huguenots do not occupy the same standpoint. Both are representatives of Calvinism, but each in a different phase of its development. With Robinson, Calvinism is more broadly developed than with de Coligni or La Noue. This has already been shown by the violence and bitterness of the troubles between the Independents and the Presbyterians. For the Presbyterians in England demanded the very thing which the Huguenots proposed in France, both for church and state.

In the church they did not want, what the Independents asked for: a circle of free, autonomic congregations. They demanded a thoroughly-organized ecclesiasticism, in which authority was vested with the synod, and from which the influence and voice of the laity were carefully excluded. In 1559 this fusion of the free congregations into one church union was effected, and only in our century has the appointing power of the boards been abolished. Was this a necessary consequence of the Calvinistic principle? By no means. In Switzerland there was no mention at this time of a synodic bond. During Calvin's lifetime there never was anything more than a consistory in Geneva. Calvin's church was absolutely autonomic. No: the motive for this close organization had another origin; its cause was not ecclesiastical, but political, and was not born of spiritual, but military interests. Consider the times. In 1559, shortly before the conspiracy of Amboise, it was felt that passive endurance had reached its limit, and that the issue was not to be decided but by the sword. The prelude of civil war had begun, and it was well known, that for such a war organization, unity of action and leadership were indispensable, but the idea was not yet born

of building "a state within the state." The Reglement de Politie et de Guerre is of 1793. This induced them to seek a substitute for the body politic, till then wanting, by strengthening the ties of the church. No war can be waged without money. To raise it, consistories assessed their congregations. Troops had to be levied, cannons and ammunition to be bought, cavalry to be hired, and for this the network of consistories spread over France was made to do service; and, to strengthen the common purpose, its cords were made to run through only a very few hands. Thus things were done in Holland, and thus they were done in France, and in both countries it was a secondary design of political and military interests, and not the claim of the principle of faith, by which the Reformed church was put, as it were, in a strait-jacket within which its life has languished for more than two hundred years.

Nor was this all. The Calvinistic principle, when logically applied, leads to separation of church and state, as soon as the state is not wholly Calvinistic. This principle could not prevail in Geneva. The dissension among the citizens of Geneva, which Calvin quieted, arose not from a difference of confession, but from shameful libertinism. There were no Romanists there. But there were Romanists in France. To assume the consequences of separation, and as a free church pay homage to the independence of civil government: this stage of development in Calvinism had not been reached. Hopes were too sanguine that the other half of the French nation also would honor the Reformation. The question in hand would then drop of itself, and the whole of France be Reformed. When this hope proved vain, and two forms of faith maintained themselves in the state, even then the proper course of action was not discovered. A way of escape was tried in the colonization plan. France would then be Catholic, and its colony Reformed. And when this failed, the other extreme became the watchword. Two states for two

faiths. A Huguenot government side by side with a Romish government in the bosom of the same nation. This was equally futile, for this insured the maintenance of the union of church and state. The Huguenots wanted to be the state church, or a church with politics of its own within the state. But, that emancipation of the church is the condition for the permanent development of its life, was not recognized in France.

The last point of difference is the aristocratic character of the French, and the democratic character of the English movement. This is explained by the fact that French nobility favored the Huguenots, and English nobility opposed the Dissenters. At least as late as the St. Bartholomew massacre, this influence continued its ascendency, and in the Synod of Orleans in 1652 was rigorously maintained against the demagogic tendency of Morel and his following. When, however, on the night of August 24, and in the succeeding days, the Protestant nobility of France were literally slaughtered, the democratic influence of necessity gained the day, and the gateway opened wide for that demagogic fanaticism which so disgraced the closing period of the War of the Huguenots. This found its cause in the very character of French conditions. Citizens in Holland and England might safely be placed at the helm of state, but not in France. Perrens' master-work "La démocratie en France au Moyenage" has but too graphically pictured to us the *Jacquerie*, and the mutinies of Etienne Marcel and Robert le Coq, than that we can fail to see how greatly, in general development, the citizens of Holland and England were in advance of the citizens of France. From the interesting dialogue "Le réveille matin des Francais," which was published as an expression of these demagogic ideas, it was readily prophesied that the apostolate of popular sovereignty would have its rise with the people of France. For therein it was stated: "A people can exist without public authority, but no public authority can exist without the people. The people create the government, by

way of a social contract, and for the sake of the advantages which accrue from an established order of things." These are the very ideas of Rousseau! And we read further: "The people that have lent authority to the king have reserved highest authority for themselves, even over the king"; and when the king becomes tyrant, "The assassination of such a despot, after the examples set by classic Greece and Rome, is to be lauded as the most praiseworthy of deeds." This Jacobin passion becomes so heated in this pamphlet, that a man from the people is finally introduced to exclaim: "A patricide used to be drowned, sewn up in a bag together with a rooster, a serpent, and an ape. What an excellent thing it would be, if this old form of punishment could be repeated in the case of King Charles, the slayer of his country. Catherine de' Medici might go with him as the serpent, Anjou as the rooster, the Duke of Retz could play the ape, and, freed from these four villainous good-for-nothings, France could once more be powerful as of yore."

These bloodthirsty notions were not engendered by Calvinism, but mingled with it. They were rife in France before Calvinism was known there at all. As early as 1408 the Romish priest John Parvus, in his "Justificatio Ducis Burgundiae coram rege recitata," defended and lauded the assassination of tyrants, saying that, on the strength of natural, moral, and divine laws, every citizen has the right to slay a tyrant, without official authority; this was the more meritorious, according as the tyrant's chances of escape from the gallows were favorable. The Sorbonne condemned this book in 1416, and with equal solemnity recalled this sentence in 1418. Moreover, John Parvus stood not alone in this matter. Even van Salisbury and Gerson, the Doctor christianissimus, "proclaimed doctrines about authority which were equally questionable," and the Spanish Jesuit John Mariana, in his "De Rege et Regis Institutione," said that he wrote for King Philip III., the Infanta, in like spirit. Equally positive and

revolutionary ideas on the sovereignty of the people are found in the writings of Boëthius, Commines, Montaigne, and Thuanus, and there was so little respect for the authority of the king, that, in 1478, one, Oliver Maillart, dared answer Louis XI., who threatened him with death by drowning: "Sir King, it will be less difficult for me to creep on my knees to the Seine, than for you, with your best coach and four, to reach any other place than hell." Let us have historic fairness. It is true that even Melanchthon and Beza approved of killing a tyrant, but when it is found that, before the Reformation broke out, and before the Father of Calvinism had yet been born, these ideas were rife, then they should not be laid to the charge of Calvinism or Romanism, but the cause of these immoral ideas should be discovered in a sinful trait of the Renaissance. For it is in this school that the false heroism of the ancient Romans and Greeks has engendered such bitter fruit.

As purer sources from which to draw knowledge of Reformed state-law, the standard works of Hottoman and Languet should be consulted. Even though this self-same false vein of the Renaissance courses through Hottoman's Franco Gallia, and through Languet and the Pseudonym, "Vindiciæ contra tyrannos," by Junius Brutus, yet, with the last-named author especially, are marked out the fundamental lines of the Calvinistic system in which roots the true, constitutional state-law. For with this learned statesman and sagacious diplomat, whose works have lately again been translated by Richard Treitzschke, is found indeed a system. He esteems all authority as descended from God. He is an advocate of the "Droit divin." In this wise, however, he looks for the sovereignty of the crown; not in the person of the king, nor yet in the isolated office of royalty, but in the organic union of this office with the "magistratus inferiores." And with these he does not mean the officers appointed by the king,

but the dispensers of power, who, independent of the will of the king, hold seats in political bodies and parliaments. These are "regni officiarii, non regis," officials of the realm, not of the king. Officials of the king are dependent on the king, but not they. Hence of the former the function is to protect the person of the king; of the latter, to prevent harm to come upon the republic. These *magistratus inferiores* have received a part of the state sovereignty of God, as well as the king. They and he together are responsible to the King of kings that authority be for the good of the people. The king's shortcomings in the discharge of duty do not release them from their oaths. If the king watch not, they must watch, though the king himself be the oppressor. This is the first germ of constitutional state-law, having its deepest root, not in the people, but in God. This doctrine of the *magistratus inferiores*, preached by Calvin, and recommended in the "Liber Magdeburgensis," was first elevated by Languet, though not without some error, into a scientific, state, judiciary system of highest rank, based upon the Word of God, and enriched with the principles of Germanic and of natural law. To this system the English revolution owes its fundamental thought, and on this was based the right of the Dutch in their brave resistance to Spanish tyranny. This very idea of sovereignty in our own circle still draws the boundary line between the people's sovereignty and our constitutional state-laws; and, as de Tocqueville has shrewdly observed, it is the decline of these *magistratus inferiores* by which our political liberty is again most seriously threatened.

V.

And herewith the uncertainty is lifted, which obscured the origin of our constitutional liberties. Since everybody knows that the Calvinistic nations in Europe, as well as in America, were the first to obtain their liberty by conquest, and have enjoyed liberty longest, and have developed the best

traits for the preservation of civil liberty; since from history it appears that America's United States, where to this day the liberty-plant thrives most luxuriantly, owes its glory not to the French Revolution but to Puritanic heroism; since, according to the unanimous testimony of all modern historians, the banner of England's greatness was first lifted by William of Orange, and the glorious revolution which brought him to the throne, appears a spiritual outcome of the War of the Independents; yea, since the archives show that the pearl of great worth, which our constitutional state-law offers for the liberty of the people, was not taken from the bed of the unholy stream of the French Revolution, but was plucked by the Rousseaus and the Montesquieus from the martyr crown of the Huguenots, and from the blood-drenched diadem of our Nassaus and Oranges;—before such testimony of facts, let the doctrinaire's prejudice yield, and let the claim which Calvinism makes of being the source and origin of our civil liberty, no longer be disputed.

This must be insisted upon, provided our last point can also be demonstrated, viz., that the process of development here traced, finds its starting-point in Calvin, and its explanation in the characteristics of the Calvinistic Confession.

Beza van Vezelay, Calvin's *fidus Achates*, marks the transition between Calvinism at Geneva and Calvinism of the Huguenots. He does not claim liberty of worship. "That every man should worship God," said he, "in any form he will, is a merely diabolical dogma." On the other hand, he has already come to despise judicial murders. To the Hungarian Baron Thelegd he writes: "Forsooth in the matter of religion no one should be persecuted by fire and the sword, this I hold as a primary principle, only let it be a care lest immorality hide behind the conscience-mask." He also defends subjection to the powers that be. He disapproves of Cæsar's murder by Brutus. But he is in favor of a Constitution. "Finally, the power of the lawful magistrate is not

illimitable." He therefore is in favor of parliaments, deputies, superiors of the people, *magistratus inferiores*, with sovereignty each in their circle. These, and not private citizens, are to resist tyrannic authority. He hailed with gladness the Dutch insurrection against Spain. For Condé he recruited cavalry regiments, and presided over the diplomatic bureau in Geneva which maintained the French Huguenots in friendly relation with Germany's Reformed princes.

If then in Beza no single character-trait is wanting, the development of which we saw in the course of Calvinism, we find them still more sharply outlined in Calvin, even if somewhat intricate because of the trappings of the times.

With him, also, we consider first the liberty of conscience. The trial of Servetus needs no recital here. Whoever chides the reformer of Geneva for this procedure makes simple exhibition thereby of lack of historic knowledge. The spirit of the times was the executioner at the stake of Servetus, and not Calvin. For this assertion we have no proof more conclusive and final than the testimony of Servetus himself, when, concerning the "incorrigible and obstinate wickedness of heresy," he writes with his own hand, that "this is a crime plainly worthy of death with God and men." What Calvin spake and did after the manner of his times does not concern us, but only that which, in distinction from the spirit of the times, he introduces as new principle. And this was his position, that, although in the essentials of our Christian confession no heresy was to be tolerated, yet toward those who diverged in minor points toleration should be shown, "since there is no one whose mind is not darkened by some little cloud of ignorance." This is a principle. The Huguenots extended this toleration to unarmed Romanists. The Holland republic went farther, and tolerated different forms of worship, at least within closed doors. Still further developed, it led in England to the "Toleration Act," until finally in America the last consequence is deduced in the emancipa-

tion of every form of worship and of everybody's conscience.

Secondly, we consider sovereignty. Calvin also honors the *droit divin.* Highest authority in monarchy or democracy reigns *Dei gratia.* But that divine right attaches to the crown, not to the person. Princes are common creatures and, as a rule, of lower morals than average men. In his "Commentary on Daniel" he writes: Monarchs, in their titles, always put forward themselves as kings, generals, and counts, by the grace of God; but how many falsely pretend to apply God's name to themselves, for the purpose of securing the supreme power. For what is the meaning of that title of kings and princes—"by the grace of God," except to avoid the acknowledgment of a superior. Meanwhile, they willingly trample upon that God, with whose shield they protect themselves,—so far are they from seriously thinking themselves to reign by his permission. It is mere pretence, therefore, to boast that they reign through God's favor. "They hear it said," he continues, "that sovereignty is inviolable, and what now do they do? They make of it a shield for themselves, as though this inviolability was predicated of their own person." At court we often see highest positions held by ignorant and unprincipled men, and the kings themselves, in these days, are often as inane as the ass among dumb brutes. Moreover, earthly princes lay aside all their power when they rise up against God, and are unworthy of being reckoned in the number of mankind. We ought rather utterly to defy them than to obey them, whenever they are so restive and wish to spoil God of his rights, and, as it were, to seize upon his throne and draw him down from heaven. This differs not a little from the *droit divin* as claimed by Louis XIV., but shows that it made Calvin no cringing slave of kings, even though we do not approve his passion.

The form of government Calvin looked upon as an outcome of history, and which, as such, commands our respect. Is it a monarchy, then honor the king. Is it democracy, then

honor the leaders. Sovereignty can be imposed by God upon a few, upon many, and upon all. This does not touch the principle itself. If, however, Calvin is free to choose, he prefers a republic. He read too closely the annals of the sins of royal autocrats, not to dislike despotism. In an authority entrusted to many there is less temptation to tyranny.

And what must be done when the authorities oppress the land? May a private person take up arms? Never, says Calvin. And when the authorities issue orders that are contrary to the honor of God, not even then. Refuse obedience, and suffer the penalty. But when Calvin is asked, whether then there is no way of resistance, he quickly adds: "This observation I always apply to private persons. For if there be any magistrates appointed for the protection of the people, as the Ephori at Sparta, or the popular tribunes at Rome, or the three estates of Parliament, then, I am so far from prohibiting them, in the discharge of their duty, to oppose the violence or cruelty of kings, that I affirm, that if they connive at kings in their oppression of their people, such forbearance involves the most nefarious perfidy, because they fraudulently betray the liberty of the people, of which they know that they have been appointed protectors by the ordination of God." With Calvin is found the origin of the system of secondary authorities, of the motto under which de Condé rose against Charles, the Netherlands against Philip, England's Parliament against the Stuarts, and the American colonies against the mother country. With Calvin is found the glorious principle from which has germinated constitutional public law.

Finally, a point which is no less worthy of emphasis is this: Calvin opposed non-intervention. According to his international law, Europe was not an aggregate of independent states, but formed one family of nations. Hence it was the duty of the prince of a neighboring realm to interfere, whenever a prince committed an offence against his people. Start-

ing from this principle, he himself, as appears from his correspondence, published by Bonnet, assisted in raising money for the German troops who went to France. In this sense also sang "the Silent," "As a Prince of Orange I am free," which meant, I am a sovereign prince in Europe's state confederation, and on this ground he entered the Dutch domains with his troops.

Of the church, let it be noted that Calvin considered the form a secondary importance. If needs be, he takes pleasure in an episcopate, as in England. But his ecclesiasticism was firmly rooted in the laity, ranging between aristocracy and democracy. His church at Geneva was autonomic. He never approved of a church organization of which the congregations were passive members. His synodical system was based upon confederation by voluntary subjection, and shunned every compulsion. And, finally, as to his views on separation of church and state, it is well known that in Geneva the two were closely united. On the other hand, it must not be overlooked that he founded free churches in Poland, in Hungary, and in France, which were in no way connected with the state, and thereby he planted the seed from which the idea of the free state also would of itself germinate, in the struggles of the Puritans.

If then the writings of Calvin contain the first creative utterances of that mighty spirit which started from Geneva, broke out in France, threw from Dutch shoulders the yoke of Spain, in England's troubles unfolded its virile strength, founded America's Union, and thus banished despotism, bridled ambition, limited arbitrariness, and gave us our civil liberties, can it likewise be shown which Calvinistic principle of faith supplies the root of these liberties? For Calvinism was, first of all, a reformation of the faith, and could not create a political liberty except as a sequel to its confession by the power of its faith.

There is no cause for surprise if, in answer to this question, even though apparently most contradictory, the fundamental doctrine of the Calvinists is cited: even the *absolute sovereignty of God.* For, from this confession, it follows that all authority and power in the earth is not inherent, but imposed; so that by nature there can no claim to authority be entered either by prince or people. God Almighty himself alone is sovereign. In comparison with himself, He esteems every creature as nothing, whether born in the royal palace or in the beggar's hut. Authority of one creature over another arises, first of all, from the fact that God confers it, not to abandon it himself, but to allow it to be used for his honor. He is sovereign, and he confers his authority upon whom he wills,—at one time to kings and princes, at another to nobles and patricians, and sometimes to the whole nation at once. American democracy is as useful an instrument for the manifestation of his sovereign glory as Russian despotism. The question is not whether the people rule, or a king, but whether both, when they rule, do it by virtue of Him.

This passes sentence upon a twofold wrong. First, upon the sovereignty of the people in the sense in which Hugo Grotius and Mirabeau proclaimed it. The idea that every man by being born of a woman has a claim to a part of the political authority, and that the state has its rise in the collection of these atomic parts, puts a limit to the sovereignty of God; it locates the source of sovereignty in man as such, and not in the mighty arm of God, and leads to the destruction of all moral authority. In like manner by this confession is condemned the *droit divin* in the sense in which it was pushed by the friends of the Stuarts, and the legitimists in France, and by the Prussian Junkerthum. The words of Charles I. on the gallows to his father confessor: "The people are not entitled to a part in the government; it belongs not to them; a king and his subjects are totally dif-

ferent persons," but echoes the evil doctrine of ancient date, which marks princes as a sort of higher beings, but which cannot accord with the confession of the free sovereignty of God. The fact that only lately the Duke of Chambord refused to accept the principles of 1789 as flatly as a treaty with the National Assembly, was the outcome of an equally false notion of the divine rights of kings. Even for a prince there cannot be, nor may be, any mention of a *regnum dei gratia*, or *droit divin* in another sense than that in which each of us exercises authority conferred on us, and on the grounds of which, after every recognition of the rights of others, we are still responsible to God.

This likewise shows that the confession of this divine right goes hand in hand with abhorrence of all worship of princes, and severely reproves all cringing before the king. If God alone is sovereign, then are we all, the king included, creatures dependent upon Him, and adoration of royalty and the esteem of princes as beings of a higher sort, are heinous offences committed against the glory of his name. Therefore the Calvinists have always demanded that the king as belonging to a church, should be dealt with as any lay member; and when one of the princes of Condé gave command to begin the battle of Drieux, the field preacher did not shrink from asking him, in the presence of his troops, how he dared to go to war without making confession of the outrage he had committed upon a daughter of one of his officers. And Condé, rather than striking him in the face with his whip, called the outraged father to him, dismounted, and did penance.

This principle of God's sovereignty turns with equal severity against the supremacy of the state. Whether that which belongs to God, is given to prince, parliament, or state makes no difference. The state, as well as the prince, is a creature that owes existence to Him, and therefore may not assume those prerogatives, of which he spake in majesty:

"I will give mine honor to none other." The Calvinists expressed this idea in their stern assertion, that unto an authority which commanded things contrary to God and his word, no one need yield, and much less obey. Hero-worship is looked upon by the Calvinist as a heinous sin; and whether the Persian despot called himself the sun-god, or Dives Augustus suffered sacrifices before his image, or whether the modern idea loses itself in apotheosis of the state, it is all the same. A true Calvinist will never be an accomplice in any such abhorrent wickedness as this.

And more remains to be said. If God's sovereignty rules the world, then he executes his plan in the exploits of heroes as well as by the sins of kings and peoples, and with disapproval of wrong, close reckonings must be made with the results of the latter. The Magna Charta was certainly extorted from John Zonderland by his barons in a way which renders them guilty; but that England's parliament should thereby obtain power, so that it is sneeringly said: "It may do everything except making a man a woman," is none the less an event which He decreed should come to pass; it created a right by Him sanctified. Nebuchadnezzar committed a sin in warring against Israel, but it was nevertheless the divine plan that Israel should go into Babylonian exile, and was productive of results for the good of Israel. So with the French Revolution. It was, as Burke expressed it none too strongly, "the most horrible of sins," but it was nevertheless a judgment of God upon kings that the ancient *régime* should terminate, and the results of the Revolution should be received with thanksgiving, not to France, but to the sovereign God, and as such accepted also by us, anti-revolutionists. For this distinguishes us from the contra-revolutionists; from the men who will not recognize the right created by history, and are bent upon the violent destruction of that which exists by virtue of history.

But this merely in passing. For a more important infer-

ence from the confession of God's sovereignty, consider for a moment the Calvinistic "Cor ecclesiae," the doctrine of election. At all times of public action, heroism, and national glory, the Calvinistic nations have confessed their faith in this doctrine, and only in days of spiritual decadence has this profoundest thought of moral life been forgotten or denied. Election is derived from the sovereighty of God. By election, the Calvinist has never meant an exaltation of self on the part of any one, but merely to emphasize that all honor belongs to God, even the honor of moral greatness and heroism of faith. It needs no repetition that from this, Calvin derived all his strength. Of our fathers and of the Huguenots this is known from their confession and petitions. Mrs. Hutchinson, whose memoirs were quoted above, wrote concerning the Puritan troubles: "At this period this important doctrine of election began to be abandoned by the Anglican prelates, but all persons more serious and saint-like, attached themselves to it with ardor." Of the founders of the American Union, Bancroft testifies, that the secret of their strength lay in their firm belief in the wonderful council of Almighty God who had elected them. Hence all fear was banished from their hearts, and they could as little become the slaves of a priestcraft as of a despot. And for more witnesses, take Professor Maurice, in his brilliant "Lectures on Social Morality." He writes: "The foundation on which we stand is immovable, for we stand upon the election, spake John Calvin, and all France, Holland, and Scotland attended to his word. That word furnished muscular vigor for the French religious wars. Holland's emancipation from Spain was the fruit of this confession. The moulding of Scotland's nationality was wrought by this spiritual principle. Yes: this incisive principle works still so mightily that social morality cannot interpret life unless it reckon with this doctrine." And no wonder. "A living God," he writes, "higher than all dogmas and systems, was heard not by the schoolman, but

by the hard-handed seller and ploughman, bidding him to rise and fight with himself, with monarchs, with devils. Let the soldiers of Alva and Philip yield to their threats. He, the Calvinist, dared not. He must defy them. For they were fighting against the Lord, who had called them out of death to life." In this lay the secret of that wonderful power called into life by this confession. He who believes in election knows himself chosen for some end, to attain which is his moral calling. A calling for the sake of which, since it is divine, life's most precious thing, if need be, must be sacrificed; but a calling also, in which success is certain, since God, who is sovereign, called him unto it. And therefore he argues not, nor does he hesitate, but puts the hand to the plough and labors on. And consider also this: A church which confesses election as its "Cor ecclesiæ" cannot be clerical, but must seek its strength in the lay members. Hence from this confession was deduced the democratic church-principle, which was soon transferred from the church to the political platform, and there called into life the liberties of Holland, the liberties of England's Whigs, and the liberties of America no less. Election creates a brave spirit in the people and undermines every principle of religious persecution. As Mrs. Hutchinson wrote, as early as 1660, "It demonstrates this grand truth that God does not approve of conversions violently forced by human laws. Our combats and our arms must therefore be spiritual."

Calvin's profound conception of sin is likewise the outcome of the recognition of the sovereignty of God. As mentioned above, he was republican because he knows that even kings are sinners, who yield to temptation perhaps more readily than their subjects, inasmuch as their temptations are greater. But he knows equally well that the self-same sin moves the masses, and that, hence, resistance, insurrection, and mutinies will not end, unless a righteous constitution bridles the abuse of authority, marks off its boundaries,

and offers the people a natural protection against despotism and ambitious schemes.

This is system. There is consequence in this. It is altogether different from the plan of the French theorists, who also clamor for liberties, but begin with a recital of the virtues of the citizen, in order presently, when herein disappointed, to reclaim this to them surprising abuse of these liberties by absolution and perjury, by the *coup d'état* and by ostracism.

Finally, from the sovereignty of God follows the sovereign authority of his word. And it is scarcely credible how greatly the study of the Old Testament especially, has ministered to the development of our constitutional liberties. All writers on Calvinistic public law, in Geneva and Scotland, in Holland and France, in England and America, from first to last, have defended the liberties of the people with appeals to the public law of Israel. Not for the sake of re-establishing Mosaic institutions in modern times. Of this Calvin says: "Others may show the danger and monstrosity of such a demand, to me its falseness and folly have been sufficiently demonstrated." But in that voluntary ministry of the prophets, in the prerogatives of the people's councils (the *Kahâl*), in the peculiar right of the tribes and heads of families, and especially in the manner of the election of their first king, there was manifest a principle of political liberty, which by the very force of its inspiration excluded every despotic authority. Of Saul it is written that he was made king both by anointing and by lot; and also, that after the liberation of Jabesh "all the people went to Gilgal and there they made Saul king." In like manner it is told of David, that he was consecrated by Samuel, but that nevertheless at Hebron he was anointed king by the elders of Judah. Nor did he obtain the crown of the apostate tribes until their elders crowned him in Hebron. Is it not self-evident, therefore, that the Calvinistic statesmen, who took no steps with-

out consulting the Scriptures, were led by the light of divine approbation to cherish the thought of a constitution of the people, which destroys not the hereditary rights of the throne, but limits the powers of the crown. The history of public opinion, as well as the writings on public law, show clearly that the fact of Saul's and David's coronation has hastened the progress of our constitutional ideas with Christian people far more than the most Utopian theories.

Thus has been shown that the plant of political liberty found its mother soil among the Calvinistic nations, Switzerland, Holland, England, and America; that America, where liberty is most profuse, is an institution of the Puritans; that the vigor of the Puritan spirit was the fruit of England's Calvinism, and that in turn the struggle of the Independents was the sequence of that vital thought, which had once animated the Huguenots in France. It has been shown that in these mighty commotions of spirit it was ever the one germ, developing itself, and that the seed from which this plant rose ever higher is to be sought in the giant mind of Calvin. The motto of his life, "God sovereign absolute," contained the magic power which is our surprise to this day, to give authority its firmest support while it allows the plant of liberty the utmost room for growth.

Does this imply the assertion that darkness reigned supreme until Calvin was born, and that only with him the first rays of light appeared? By no means. Boldest genius is, and must ever be, the child of its times, and even Calvin's majestic figure was born of the past. No: the reformer of Geneva was not the first to mingle a thirst for liberty and an aversion to tyranny with the blood of the Germanic race. Before him an Arminius in the Teutoburgen forest, and a Claudius Civiles in Holland domains, had known how to break in pieces the shackles of oppression. An enemy to tyranny has our race been through all ages, and Romish as

well as Reformed heroes have defended the people's rights and liberties against the Alvas and the Vargas. At Calvin's appearance the Christian church also was already fifteen hundred years old, and that through her spiritual offspring she took no part with tyrants, had been shown conclusively to the Corinthians by the hero of Tarsus, to the Emperor Theodosius by Ambrose in Milan, by Wycklif in chains, Huss at the stake, and Luther at the Diet of Worms. Add to this the influence of the Renaissance, whereby speech was restored to the heroes of Marathon, and the glory of Greece and ancient Rome was once more made apparent, and these three elements, the Germanic, the Christian, and the Renaissance, are the factors which foretold broader liberties for the people, before Geneva's name was yet heard. But these elements repelled each other, instead of lending mutual support. In the strife of the Guelphs and the Ghibellines, the church combatted with the German spirit, the ridicule of the Humanists fought Obscurantism, presently all Christendom was in arms against the Renaissance, and in these struggles it was both times the scene of Solomon's court repeated; both parties claimed to be mother of the child of liberty, and, less pitiful than before Solomon's tribunal, they cut the living child in two. Hence absolutism prevailed. And to overthrow it the spirited enthusiasm of the Germans must needs be curbed, the church purified, the Renaissance sanctified, and the three rubies strung into one chain. And this was done by Calvin. In the fires of his genius were forged the vigor of Germanism, the liberty of the Christian spirit, and the virtue of the classics into that precious metal, from which Holland also cast its goddess of liberty surmounting the Holy Scriptures, and the liberty cap with this inscription —"By this we strive, this we guard."

But alas, from his hands most of Europe's nations have not desired to accept the fresh waters of liberty. The Reformation was execrated, and Italy declined, and Spain fell

away: the Hapsburgers burrowed deep into the hearts of their people. France was hailed, and in its great king a true Eastern despot was tolerated. Hence the horrors of oppression, which, regardless of parliaments and courts, allowed the people to be trampled under foot by the nobility and courtiers, and extinguished in the hearts of the people every spark of liberty. This spirit was communicated to German courts where, for French money and French mistresses, German nobleness was offered for sale, and the youth of the land were sold like slaves to swell the numbers of a foreign army. Even the cantonal courts of Switzerland were contaminated in an evil hour, and under French influence, Holland's free states were infected with that self-same spirit of pride and of contempt for the people, in the form of patrician nepotism.

This could not last. Europe's fiery spirit is bound to rule Asia, but in free Europe there is no room for Asiatic despotism of Persian satraps. A break therefore was inevitable, and violent upheavals, and it was the judgment of God upon the despotism of the courts and the slavish subjection of the people that the means of salvation came in the horrors of the French Revolution.

The thing wanted was pure air; the cry arose for liberty, and behold, in Calvinistic countries there was a great store of both. These liberty-forms were imitable. But that which lay not in store, was the moral element, the heroism of the faith of our fathers, by which Calvinism had become great; that which was wanting, were the *magistratus inferiores* to forward the battle for liberty along the lines of law; that which was no more found, was international law, which promised outside help against the tyranny of nobility and monarch.

Then arose the Encyclopedists, the spiritual children of Hugo Grotius, that colossus of learning and irreconcilable enemy of the Calvinistic name. Though Grenovius refuted

his demonstration, borrowed from Holy Writ, it made no difference. It was Grotius' system not to locate the point of departure for his revolutionary idea in the faith, but in the social disposition of man. In this the Deists were his followers, and soon after, the school of the Encyclopedists in France. And thus was born the doctrine, the dogma of the rights of man which tried to graft the Calvinistic liberties, cut from their natural root, into the wild trunk of human self-sufficiency and caprice. Striking was the imitation of the structure above ground, but in the fundamentals was hidden the antithesis. In Calvinism is recognized the sovereignty of God, the sinfulness of man, and the claims of a stern morality; and in the clubs of the Parisian September heroes God's sovereignty was superseded by the doctrine of the sovereignty of self. Man was flattered in his self-esteem, and unchained his unholiest passions.

This movement set France, and presently all Europe, on fire. Whatever stood, toppled over. Man and his home, society and state, were turned upside down. The rabble broke loose. And after the first wild song of unbounded revenge was over, Robespierre's terrorism and then Napoleon's grasp made the nations feel what becomes of the liberty of the people, which has been declared sovereign, when faith and *magistratus inferiores* are wanting. But under the animating leaderships of the Pitts and the Steins, Europe raised herself from so great humiliation. As said above, there is no room in Europe for Asiatic despotism, but there is less room yet for the African-Timbuctoo-blood thirst. The frenzy of the Septembrists was checked, and from the battle-field at Leipzig was raised the cry of salvation. A just judgment had come upon the kings and the great ones in the earth as well as upon our patricians and rulers; the blood and tears of downtrodden nations found their *sera vindicta* in the French Revolution; the honor of liberty was saved. With its perpetrators remains the guilt of the sinful principle of this rev-

olution and its crimes. God will judge them; but in the face of guilt and judgment, a blessing was conferred upon all Europe. What had been refused at the hand of Calvinism, was received with avidity at the hand of the French liberty heroes, and, however much Rome and the spirits of Restoration and of Romanticism sought re-establishment of the past, the nations of Europe would tolerate it no longer. Hence after the revolution of 1830, as well as after the revolution of 1848, the fruit of Calvinism was spared, at least in part.

Of Calvinism indeed. For what the French Revolution wrought in its own strength, ask it of poor France, which, after exhausting herself for the sake of a false idea, having battled through fourteen revolutions and worn out every form of state, still hurries on, with a δός μοι ποῦ στῶ on her lips, in pursuit of liberty, which forever eludes her grasp. What revolution could accomplish, ask it of Spain, which has been scourged so pitilessly, which from the zenith of her glory has been falling ever lower, until now she can scarcely claim sympathy without rousing contempt also. And for further testimony, Mexico and Peru, Chile and Uraguay, all of which are model revolutionary republics,—one of which even boasts the Phrygian cap on a dagger as her coat of arms—would in comparison with the Union of the United States eloquently express this difference.

But danger threatens our western states also. As said before, we appreciate the fruit of the French Revolution. According to God's plan, even in its sinfulness, it served to advance the spread of Calvinistic liberties. This is no cause for complaint, but rather for rejoicing. Upon one condition, however, viz., that the poisonous element which it introduced into Europe's state organism be not overlooked. It did something more than copy Calvinistic liberties. It introduced a system likewise, a catechism and a doctrine, which, in opposition to God and his righteousness, loosened the

bonds of order and authority, undermined the securities of social life, offered free scope to the passions, and made room for the material and lower appetites to rule and enslave the spirit.

We, anti-revolutionists, have taken up arms against this system, not against those liberties. We know the *perspectives du paradis* cannot be realized on earth, but we are equally unwilling, without just cause, to retrace our steps to the *supplices de l'enfer*.

Thinking it an act of wisdom, the press has taken delight in calling us extreme revolutionists whenever our protests were entered against reaction and repristination. But this is a mistake. So little are we averse to revolutions, in the general sense, that the insurrection of Greece against Persia commands our admiration, and Switzerland's insurrection against the Hapsburgs awakens our sympathies, the resistence of Holland against Spain incites our love, England's glorious revolution receives our hearty approval, and America's liberation our warmest praise and applause.

But protest is entered against those who place these revolutionists side by side with the French Revolution.

Bluntschli's name excites no suspicion in the minds of liberals, and yet in his "Geschichte des allgemeinen Staatsrechts" he writes: "The English revolution did not intend, as the French Revolution did later on, to bring into the world a new state, and a new law; its only purpose was to defend the ancient rights of the people and with new guarantees to re-establish them."

And why not quote Burke, introduced among us by Professor Opzoomer in his rectoral oration in 1857 as a liberal statesman *par excellence* and a most trustworthy guide in all matters politic. Edmund Burke was an anti-revolutionist. He defended the American insurrection, because faith "always a principle of energy showed itself in this good people the main cause of a free spirit, the most adverse to all im-

plicit submission of mind and opinion." To those who compare England's glorious revolution with the French Revolution, Burke answers: "Our revolution and that of France are just the reverse of each other in almost every particular and in the whole spirit of the transaction." And on being asked why *he* is an anti-revolutionist, and therefore bitterly opposed to the French Revolution, he answers: "Because the French Revolution is a turning-upside-down of society, and its system an antichristian doctrine." "We are at war not with a people, but with a system, and that system by its essence is subversive of every government." "The course hitherto of the revolution irresistibly suggests in its wild dismemberments of social forces the ancient myth of the deluded youths who tore asunder their venerable parent, and thrust into a boiling caldron the severed limbs, expecting thence to see him spring whole and rejuvenate." In fewer words still the antithesis is stated: "We are fighting for the rights of Englishmen, not of men."

Like Burke, we Calvinists in Holland favor liberty, and oppose all violence against orderly processes of nature. We favor liberty. We are not Calvinists in the sense that we suppose a return to conditions of old could do us any good. Our Calvinism is alive and contains the power of development: Why should we then desire a phase we have long since outgrown? We propose therefore no restoration of the state church; we rather despise it, knowing that it hurts the faith. We ask not the church to be school-mistress, knowing that it robs instruction of its vigor. We wish no restoration of former favoritisms, for it begets envy and bitterness. We seek no disruption of Union, for our hope for the future lies not in provincialism but in Nationality. Disregard of constitutional rights and privileges would meet its most violent opposition from our quarters; an attack against constitutional monarchy would find in us most implacable antagonism. But we ask equal rights for all, of whatever class or faith. Freedom of conscience, and of the press, of social

union and of thought, we will defend with all our might. We want the liberation of the church by an honest and absolute separation from the state, its finances included; liberation from the school, not to restore it to the care of the church, but under state regulation to restore it to the parents, because the impersonal state cannot be a teacher of our youth. We want to strengthen the cords that bind our people to the house of Orange, provided there be maintained that republican character trait of our people, of which Orange itself is both symbol and safeguard. We defend decentralization, organic representation of the people, and moral colonial politics. We demand more liberty for our seminaries, more independence in administration of justice, even by a jury, if needs be. And as for public defence, let it be said that Switzerland, England, and America, which are Calvinistic countries, spend least money on their armies, and their liberty, according to common opinion, is even now best assured.

And if, for the sake of this free programme and the banner of Christian liberalism which we raise on high, we are to be classed with the radicals of the Left, we dispute not that right, at least in part. There is some truth in the lately published Joshua Davids. In the formal programme of our social life, Fourier and St. Simon make near approaches to the prophet of Nazareth. Deramy understood it well: the holy Apostle Paul is also the apostle of democracy. But it should not be overlooked that no two things resemble each other so closely as the leaves on the true vine and the wild.

This is the case in hand. If our demands sound like those of the most active radicalism, they bloom on roots altogether different from theirs. *Duo cum faciunt idem, non est idem.* "We expect everything of the faith, they nothing."

Of the faith, and of this claim we can make no surrender. We love our liberties, and from the lessons of histories of nearly three centuries we have learned that the faith alone contains vital power to guard and keep these liberties for us and for our children unto latest generations.